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## Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space American Historical Association Meeting History, Society, and the Sacred

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**Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space  
American Historical Association Meeting  
History, Society, and the Sacred**

**Boston, January 6-9, 2011**



**Call for papers for a multi-session workshop entitled *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space* as part of "History, Society, and the Sacred," the American Historical Association Meeting, in Boston, Massachusetts, January 6-9, 2011. This workshop is being organized by Ana Lucia Araujo, Department of History, Howard University.**

The last two decades have seen considerably increased interest in issues connected to memory and the historical past such as museums, monuments, festivals, and commemorative events. Following the World War II, Holocaust survivors became the quintessential example of victims who embodied the resurgence of memory. As witnesses of incarceration, forced labor, and genocide they were able to narrate the traumatic events they experienced. Following the emergent memorial wave of the post-WWII, slavery gradually became an object of public memory. The emergence of the public memory of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade, which some years ago could be observed mainly in North America, was slowly transformed into a transnational phenomenon now including Europe, Africa, and Latin America; allowing the populations of African descent, organized groups, governments and societies in these different regions to individually and collectively update and reconstruct the slave past. In some cases, the emergence of the memory of slavery was followed by claims of financial compensation, but frequently social and historical actors express the need for memorialization through public commemoration, museums, monuments, festivals, and holidays. Some of these initiatives led public personalities such as the Pope John Paul II, President Bill Clinton and the PM Tony Blair to publicly express their sorrow for the Atlantic slave trade. During the 1990s commemoration activities and official projects to promote the history and the memory of slavery became more visible in Europe, Africa and the Americas, the UNESCO's Slave Route Project being the most important initiative of this kind. At the same time, there were attempts, not always successful, to highlight and compare the Atlantic slave trade and slavery to slavery and the slave trades in African soil, the Indian Ocean and the Muslim world.

**Taking the transnational emergence of the memory of slavery in the last twenty years as a point of departure, the workshop aims to examine the particularities of this memorial wave in one or more regions of the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia. Paper proposals dealing with different aspects of the public memory of slavery, here seen as the reconstruction of the slave past in the present, such as monuments, memorials, museums, exhibitions, festivals, holidays, films, television series, websites, internet forums, virtual communities, literary works, images and textbooks will attempt to answer the following questions: What political stakes encompassed the emergence of the public memory of slavery in national and transnational spaces? What aspects characterized the presence or the absence of slavery and the slave trade in public spaces of various regions of the Americas, Europe and Africa? What difficulties and problems accompanied the appropriation of the public sphere? What actors did lead (or benefit from) this appropriation? What conflicting elements did emerge from this appropriation? What elements were absent from this new presence of slavery in the public arena? How did the public memory of slavery and the slave trade contrast with private and family memories? What images of slavery and enslaved Africans were emphasized or neglected? What the emergence of the public memory of slavery can tell us about the present-day conditions of populations of African descent in the national and transnational spaces?**

**Please send your paper proposal no later than February 1st 2010 to: [aaaraujo@howard.edu](mailto:aaaraujo@howard.edu) or [analucia.araujo@gmail.com](mailto:analucia.araujo@gmail.com). Paper proposals must be written in ENGLISH and contain: Paper's title; Abstract (up to 300 words); Biographical paragraph (up to 250 words, no curriculum vitae, please); Correct mailing and e-mail address; Audiovisual needs, if any. Chairs and commentators, please send: Biographical paragraph (up to 250 words, no curriculum vitae, please); Correct mailing and e-mail addresses. When writing your paper proposal, be aware that abstracts of accepted proposals will be posted on the program website. The workshop will probably include several formats of panels, including sessions with precirculated papers. If your paper and panel are accepted in this kind of session, you will be invited to submit your paper in December 1st 2010, in order to allow AHA Program Committee to post your paper on the conference website.**